

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A composition of matter comprising an isolated polypeptide ~~shown in~~ consisting essentially of SEQ ID NO:1 and amino acid substitution variants thereof that specifically bind to an anti-*Ehrlichia* antibody or variants thereof.
2. (Original) The composition of claim 1, further comprising a carrier.
3. (Currently Amended) An article of manufacture comprising packaging material and, contained within the packaging material, a polypeptide ~~shown in~~ consisting essentially of SEQ ID NO:1 or amino acid substitution variants thereof that specifically bind to an anti-*Ehrlichia* antibody.
4. (Currently Amended) The article of manufacture of claim 3 wherein the packaging material comprises a label that indicates that the polypeptide can be used for the identification of ~~Ehrlichia~~ *Ehrlichia* infection in a mammal.
5. (Currently Amended) ~~The~~ An article of manufacture of claim 4, comprising packaging material and, contained within the packaging material, a polypeptide consisting essentially of SEQ ID NO:1 or amino acid substitution variants thereof that specifically bind to an anti-*Ehrlichia* antibody, wherein the packaging material comprises a label that indicates that the polypeptide can be used for identification of ~~Ehrlichia~~ *Ehrlichia* infection in a mammal, and wherein the label indicates that the identification of an ~~Ehrlichia~~ *Ehrlichia* infection is done using a method of detecting presence of antibodies to ~~Ehrlichia~~ *Ehrlichia* comprising:
 - (a) contacting a polypeptide ~~shown in~~ consisting essentially of SEQ ID NO:1, or amino acid substitution variants thereof that specifically bind to an anti-*Ehrlichia* antibody,

with a test sample suspected of comprising antibodies to ~~Ehrlichia~~ *Ehrlichia*, under conditions that allow polypeptide/antibody complexes to form;

(b) detecting polypeptide/antibody complexes;

wherein the detection of polypeptide/antibody complexes is an indication that an ~~Ehrlichia~~ *Ehrlichia* infection is present.

6. (Currently Amended) ~~The~~ An article of manufacture ~~of claim 4, comprising~~ packaging material and, contained within the packaging material, a polypeptide consisting essentially of SEQ ID NO:1 or amino acid substitution variants thereof that specifically bind to an anti-*Ehrlichia* antibody, wherein the packaging material comprises a label that indicates that the polypeptide can be used for identification of ~~Ehrlichia~~ *Ehrlichia* infection in a mammal, and wherein the ~~Ehrlichia~~ label indicates that the *Ehrlichia* infection is caused by *Ehrlichia canis* or *Ehrlichia chaffeensis*.

7. (New) A composition of matter comprising an isolated polypeptide that is 20 amino acids in length, which comprises SEQ ID NO:1 or amino acid substitution variants thereof, wherein the polypeptide specifically binds to an anti-*Ehrlichia* antibody.

8. (New) An article of manufacture comprising packaging material and, contained within the packaging material, an isolated polypeptide that is 20 amino acids in length, which comprises SEQ ID NO:1 or amino acid substitution variants thereof, wherein the polypeptide specifically binds to an anti-*Ehrlichia* antibody.